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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DIABETES

DDK FELLOWS NEWSLETTER

AND DIGESTIVE AND KIDNEY DISEASES

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The Fellows Advisory Board (FAB) in collaboration with the NIDDK Fellowship Office has started a monthly newsletter to announce events and news. If you would like to help write articles for the newsletter or have any questions or comments regarding the newsletter or FAB, please contact:

Editor-in-Chief and Layout:
Lystranne Maynard
maynardl@mail.nih.gov

Webmaster, Photography
and Layout:
Nicholas Noinaj
noinajn@niddk.nih.gov

Webmaster:
Udesh de Silva
desilvau@niddk.nih.gov

Life Beyond NIDDK – A Career Interview with a Former Fellow

by Heather Baker

For all fellows contemplating the ever important question of what they plan to do when they finish their fellowship at the NIH, this column, which features interviews of former NIDDK fellows and highlights how they arrived in their current career positions, is a must read. Nominations of former fellows are always welcome. Please send their name and contact information to the newsletter. This month's featured fellow is Amanda Skoumbourdis. She is currently working as a Ph.D. Scientific Advisor for an intellectual property company in New Jersey.

Informer: Tell us about your graduate and postdoctoral background:

Amanda Skoumbourdis: I received my Ph.D. in

Organic Chemistry from the Pennsylvania State University in 2005. My thesis research, under the direction of Professor Ken S. Feldman, primarily focused on new methodology for application in alkaloid total synthesis. I joined the NIH (and the NIDDK) as a post-doc in the Chemical Biology Core Facility where I participated in many collaborations throughout the NIDDK and the NIH, mainly through synthetic development of both novel and known bio-active molecules, which were used as research tools. I eventually transferred to the NIH Chemical Genomics Center, where I continued many of my NIH collaborations and also trained in high-throughput medicinal chemistry for the



Amanda Skoumbourdis, a former NIDDK fellow.

synthesis of chemical probes.

Informer: Can you briefly describe your current job?

Amanda Skoumbourdis: I'm currently the Scientific Advisor for Intellectual Property at Sandoz, Inc., the generic pharmaceuticals division of Novartis.

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Tech Corner-LabLife

by Tara Martin



One of the most common scenarios in my laboratory day-to-day is the frantic shuffling through the "organized" stacks of papers around my desk to find that protocol that really should be in the binder labeled 'Protocols' that has nonetheless ended up at the bottom of the papers-I-should-be-reading-in-my-

spare-time pile. Anyone?

One of the handiest and fairly user friendly tools I have come across recently is LabLife (<http://www.lablife.org>).

This program has the capability to be your personal database, as well as to serve the lab as a whole. You can upload

protocols, gel images, reagents, storage information and more. The system is backed-up daily on two different servers to ensure protection of your information, and there is an option to print out your data in an Excel-sheet format.

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Life Beyond NIDDK, continued from page 1



Amanda Skoumbourdis (cont):

My position involves providing high-level scientific input for Paragraph IV ANDA filings and subsequent litigations as well as guiding my group members through the scientific aspects of their day-to-day activities.

Informer: Is your current position what you expected it to be like?

Amanda Skoumbourdis:

I think I am developing my position into what I thought it would be like. My original title upon joining the group was Patent Searcher, and my main task was to find patents associated with branded pharmaceuticals. This quickly became monotonous, especially after years of high-level research! However, from my first day, I was being asked a range of scientific questions by the attorneys, from deciphering IUPAC names to leveraging my opinion on a route of synthesis. While all the attorneys in the group have undergraduate degrees in either physical or biological science, I am the only group member with an advanced degree in Organic chemistry, which is very valuable for this line of work. Soon after joining, I was tasked with finding prior art, which are documents like journal articles or older patents that cite information before the patent of interest was filed. These types of references

are important when filing a challenge against a listed patent. I now work directly with the attorneys to develop challenges for a broad range of pharmaceutical patents. I've really made my position into what I want it to be.

Informer: If your job is not in the traditional career pathway (academia or industry), why did you decide to leave research and pursue your current career?

Amanda Skoumbourdis:

While I am in a nontraditional career, the option chose me! Upon completing my postdoc I needed to find a job that would allow my husband and I to live together, and in this difficult economy, this was the best option offered. Had I had more liberty to choose my geographic location, I may have gone the more traditional route. However, I do like that I have been exposed to a whole new industry (generic pharmaceuticals) and have learned a great deal since joining the company in 2008.

Informer: Can you provide some advice to current postdocs, i.e. skills and experience required for your current position?

Amanda Skoumbourdis:

My position requires a strong background in organic and medicinal chemistry, as my main job is to invalidate patents that

protect branded drug products. About half of my time is devoted to reading patents and journal articles, most of which are directly related to the active ingredient. I am also responsible for finding references for a wide range of topics, from crystal structures to formulations, and to be able to summarize and speak knowledgeably on the content, even when it's outside of my training background. For this position you need to think quickly and be able to comment on a topic on a moment's notice, with or without prior knowledge of the topic. You need to be flexible and able to multitask; I literally work on more than 10 projects at a time! It's a fast paced environment and can be very rewarding, which is what I wanted most from a position.

Informer: Would you mind current postdocs contacting you to ask for further information?

Amanda Skoumbourdis:

I welcome any questions any one has and hope I can answer them!

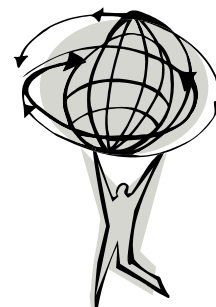
*Amanda Skoumbourdis, Ph.D.
Scientific Advisor
Intellectual Property
Sandoz Inc.*

*506 Carnegie Center
Princeton, NJ 08540
amanda.skoumbourdis@sandoz.com*

Extramural Review Branch Internships for NIDDK Fellows

Training in Scientific Review and Research Analysis,
Opportunities for Research & Resume Enhancement;
Develop Marketable Skills;
Expand your Networking Contacts and Program Management.

Applicants should contact: **Dr. Louis Simchowicz, Director of the Fellowship Office** for more information



NIH & FDA Glycosciences Research Day

The NIH Glycobiology Interest Group (GBIG), with support from the NIH Office of Intramural Research, the FDA, NIGMS, NIDCR and the Foundation for NIH, will hold its third annual NIH & FDA-wide Glycosciences Research Day on Monday May 24, 2010, in the Natcher Conference Center.

This event will explore a broad range of aspects of the glycosciences, promote communication and interaction among intramural laboratories, and build collaborations. The meeting includes morning and afternoon platform and poster sessions as well as vendor exhibits.

Abstract submission deadline: April 12th 2010.

More information can be found at <http://meetings.nigms.nih.gov/?ID=8924>

OITE Seminar – Careers in Regulatory Affairs

Considering a career in regulatory affairs? The field of regulatory affairs offers opportunities for trained scientists in both the public and private sectors. These scientists set regulatory standards, as well as develop and test many of products people use in their daily lives. This event is sponsored by FELCOM.

Speakers: Kristi Muldoon Jacobs, PhD, Toxicologist, FDA; Melanie Hartsough, PhD, Senior Consultant, Biologics Consulting Group; Suzanne Sensabaugh, MS, MBA, Founder & Member Hartmann Willner LLC, Kay Austin, PhD, EPA

Date/Time/Location: April 15 (Thursday), 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Lipsett Amphitheater, Building 10

Please register: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/B7GCSB6>

Upcoming Social Events:

Saturday April 10th: DC Nerd Nite – DC9 Restaurant, 6 pm.
Friday April 16th: Visiting Fellows Social, FAES House, 6-11 pm.
Wednesday April 28th: FelCom Happy Hour, BlackFinn, 6-10 pm.

For more information about social events contact Aurora Fountainhas:

fountainhasa@niddk.nih.gov

NIDDK/NIH

9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

**NIDDK Office of Fellow
Recruitment and Career
Development office**

Bldg 12A, Rm. 3011.
301-451-3640 (voice)
301-402-7461 (fax)

fellowships@intra.nidk.nih.gov

(e-mail)

fellowshipoffice.nidk.nih.gov

Staff Members:

Louis Simchowicz, M.D., M.B.A.
Director

Kala Viswanathan
Program Specialist

Lorraine Moore
Program Assistant

We're on the Web!**NIDDK Fellowship Office:**

[http://fellowshipoffice.nidk
.nih.gov](http://fellowshipoffice.nidk.nih.gov)

**NIDDK Informer
Newsletter:**

[http://fellowshipoffice.nidk
.nih.gov/newsletter](http://fellowshipoffice.nidk.nih.gov/newsletter)

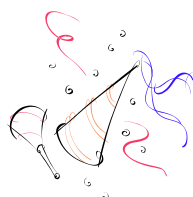
Tech Corner-LabLife, continued from page 1

You can also tag your entries with keywords of your choosing and this makes your data searchable. I LOVE this option!

My personal favorite is the Lab tab. If your PI and lab mates are on board, you can have a Lab profile on LabLife as well. This enables a laboratory to have an online database of reagents and supplies, much like the Personal profile, but everything in this tab is accessible to all lab members. There is even a shopping list feature where lab members can note what needs to be ordered for the lab in one convenient place.

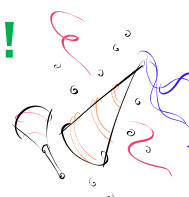
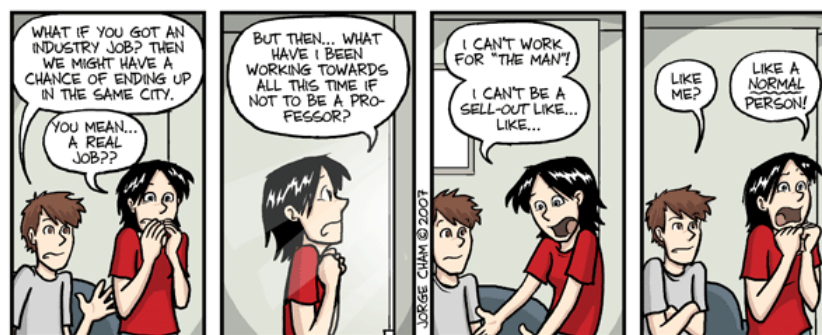
While there are some great features in LabLife, there are some drawbacks to using this program. The system is backed-up, but as we all know from experience, things can happen. It might be possible to lose all of the data you have stored, so it is best to backup your data. To do this you can use the print option, or to have another database where everything is also stored.

Another issue that I am hoping they address soon is the ability to upload large databases. Currently it is a one-at-a-time upload system, and if you are attempting to transfer a massive plasmid storage file, this could be quite time consuming. There is an option to contact the website for large data uploads, but it would be much easier to have a button where you could just upload a current Excel file.

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

to the Fellowship Office and
all the NIDDK Fellows
for a FUN and
SUCCESSFUL RETREAT!

Look for the full review in the upcoming
newsletter!

**Ph.D. Comics**

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM